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THE ANCIENT NESTORIAN CHURCH AND ITS PRESENT INFLUENCE IN KURDISTAN

By E. W. McDowell, Vane, Turkey-in-Asia

The Honorable James Bryce in a recent lecture at Chautauqua emphasized the importance of the study of church history as being the cord that gives unity and continuity to all other history.

Scotland itself is a preëminent illustration in support of this statement. Eliminate the church from the history of the Scotch people and how impossible it would be for a future generation to trace the transition from Rob Roy to James Bryce.

Asia is no exception to this rule. When some future historian gives us a connected and adequate account of the Asiatic nations, religion will be found to be the cord which will give coherency and continuity to his narrative of the rise and fall of those nations.

It may not be out of connection, therefore, with your study of present day conditions in the near East, if you are reminded of what one branch of the Church of Jesus Christ once effected in Asia. It will be suggestive of the present day value of the church as a factor in the social and political regeneration of Turkey.

In this paper, therefore, I wish, first, to recall to your minds, very briefly, some of the leading facts in the history of the Nestorian Church; second to give you some impressions of the present day conditions in Kurdistan as related to the revolution; and, third to inquire what influence these Christians may be exerting over their Kurdish neighbors as affecting their minds favorably toward the new dispensation.

Let us take as our starting point the first Edinboro Missionary Conference held in the City of Antioch and reported

to us in the 14th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles by Luke, the first church historian. It would not be a misnomer to call it a laymen's movement which resulted in the sending forth of that great lay missionary Paul the result of whose labors so profoundly affected the history of Europe.

As Paul was sent to the West so other missionaries were sent to the East. The labors of these missionaries speedily resulted in the establishing of the Chaldean Church among the Aramaic speaking people of Syria. It was only after the fifth century that the name Nestorian was fastened on this church by its opponents. The term the Nestorians themselves prefer and most frequently use, is the term—The Church of the East.

This church thus begotten in the first century of the Christian era has had a continuous existence to this present time. In the wide area of its field, in the extent of its labors, in the number of its adherents, in the celebrity of its schools, it at one time surpassed its sister church of Rome and bid fair to do for Asia what the Church of the West did for Europe.

It numbered among its leaders men of broad and liberal views. It is interesting to note that in the ancient ritual, still used by this church in their secluded valleys, prayer is offered for all branches of the Church of Christ, including the Church of Rome which is mentioned by name.

The greatest monument, of course, of these scholars is their translation of the Scriptures into the language of the common people,—the Peshitto version. Aside from this, there were also commentaries, remarkable some of them, for the practicality of their interpretation of Scripture, and devotional works as evangelical and spiritual as the writings of Spurgeon or Murray.

Fragments of these writings have survived the plunderings and burnings and wars of eighteen centuries. This literature of the Church of the East is to be found in the libraries of London and Paris and especially in the Vatican at Rome. Some of it is being preserved in the Presbyterian Mission Library in Urumia, Persia, and a fragment of it remains in the possession of the Nestorians themselves.

Scholars are still hoping to find in old church or mountain hut ancient manuscripts which will throw light upon the past.

But it is especially of the missionary activity of the Nestorian Church I would remind you.

The first few centuries saw a rapid extension of the church in Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, around the borders of Arabia and along the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris. In Kurdistan there remain very old church buildings, bearing the names of the Apostles who first brought the Gospel to those dark mountains, Mar Zia, Mar Tawoor, Mar Salathiel, Mar Yokhanan and others. It is with reverence that one creeps through the low doors of these old mountain churches into the dark interior where for over a thousand years the candle of worship has been kept dimly burning.

Persia and India were also entered at the same early date, and the adherents of the church numbered, it is estimated, several millions. In India there remain today some two hundred thousand of these Christians.—It is interesting to note that during these last few years delegations from the church in India have visited the Patriarch of the Nestorians in Kurdistan asking him to send a bishop among them with a view to restoring them to his jurisdiction and that he has sent such a bishop.

Going still further East traces of the footprints of the Nestorian missionary merchants, or merchant missionaries are to be found in Thibet and Mongolia. The marked likeness of the letters of the Mongolian alphabet to those of the Syriac suggests the possibility of literary labors among the Mongols.

The interest of their history culminates in China where the well-known Nestorian monument, bearing the date of 781 A.D. testifies to the existence of an influential Christian community in that land as early as the 7th century. The student of history will find exceedingly interesting the story of the reception of the Nestorian missionaries into China at the beginning of the 6th century by the Emperor T'ai Tsung and his Empress, both of whom were broadminded

and as generous and as good as they were wise. This was China's golden age.

This is a brief and very bare summary of the activities of the Church of the East. But it is sufficient to recall to our minds the noteworthy historical fact that as early as the 7th century the Gospel had been preached more or less thoroughly by the Church of the East throughout the greater part of Asia, from the Mediterranean to the Pacific and that it was done without the protection of a home government or the support of a missionary board.

What was the interrelationship of the Church and the states it entered, as Persia, India and China; how and to what extent they influenced one another; and what the influence upon history not only of what the church did but of what it might have done and failed to do—all this will constitute the interesting task of some future historians.

The causes of the decline and disintegration of this great church need not be entered upon here. It is enough to say that its fall parallels closely the fall of the churches in the West.

The rise of Mohammedanism is intimately associated as an effect with the corruption of the Nestorian Church and its failure to fulfill its great commission; and it was the sword of Mohammed that was made the instrument of the swift judgment that was visited upon it. It is interesting to observe how closely the armies of Islam followed the paths of the early missionaries of the cross and how they have occupied practically the same area. Before the fiery and fanatical zeal of Caliphs and barbarian conquerors this great and widespread church melted away as spring time snow before a mountain torrent until there remained only two small bodies holding to the Nestorian faith—the Malabar Christians of India and the Nestorians of Kurdistan.

It was a very precarious refuge the Nestorians found in those wild mountains, which lie on the border between Turkey and Persia and where today their young patriarch still rules over the small remnant of his flock.

The history of this exiled church deserves to be recorded as perhaps the most glorious in the annals of the Church of Christ.

Let there be recalled the long wars and the bloody conquests of the Saracen armies in the East and the West; the fear the very name Saracen inspired in the heart of European Christians down until even the little children learned to lisp the daily litany, "Have mercy Oh! Lord and save us from the Saracens." Recall the crusades when all Europe dashed itself in vain against the buckler of the Moslem only to leave him sevenfold more intense in his bigotry and fanatical hatred of all that bore the name of Christian. Recall all this long troubled period, then think of this little flock—so few, so feeble—cut off from their brethren of the West, away off there in the very heart of Islam, still keeping afloat from their mountain ramparts the banner of the cross. After the crusades they were despised by their Moslem neighbors, hated by them at times with a fanatical hatred, oppressed by them almost continuously and many times massacred by them, but amid these fires of persecution, fires which have been burning a thousand years and which still burn, they have been unswerving in their allegiance and devotion to the name of Jesus Christ.

There is another aspect to this heroic adherence to their faith. For centuries there was in operation a Moslem law which in case a member of a Christian family became a Moslem gave the entire estate of the family to the Moslem convert.

But against both the sword of Islam and such indirect seduction this exiled church has preserved its existence and maintained at least the form of worship. And not only against Mohammedanism has it had to struggle for existence. The Church of the West from which the Nestorian Church seceded, or was cut off, has never forgotten or forgiven the schism. The Roman Catholic Church has throughout the centuries, but more especially in modern times, sought most strenuously to bring the Nestorian Church into subjection to the See of Rome, which efforts, however have been in vain.

The Nestorians of today are an intensely conservative people. Their past is still cherished by even the ignorant mountain peasants. Occasionally one will hear a villager

speak of one of the early Ecumenical Councils by name, as a Presbyterian today might quote the Pittsburgh Assembly of 1870. The deliverances of those early Councils are still preserved by them in their ancient Syriac language and constitute their book of Church Government, ruling them in all such things as marriage, divorce, inheritance and ecclesiastical procedures.

Though they have been held for centuries in a degrading subjection to Moslems and have had no schools, yet the people as a whole have retained their love of books and especially of the Bible. It is a common occurrence for a rude mountaineer to learn to read and write his ancient tongue and then with great pains and in a beautiful hand to transcribe some of their ancient books simply because of his reverence for them.

Their old manuscripts are to be found in the most out of the way villages, in huts scarce fit for human habitation; and when this hut is being stripped by Turkish tax collector or plundering Kurd all else is allowed to go, but the books are secreted and saved as constituting their most prized possession.

The student would find much to interest him in the study of these people as they are today. The past lives again in them. Some of the tribes of the mountain Nestorians because of the inaccessibility of their valleys have been able for centuries to maintain their independence of the Turkish government. This armed independence, however, has occasioned enmities which have closely confined them to those remote valleys. There they have lived a primitive life, almost entirely self sustained and largely free from foreign influence. Individualism among them has been carried to its last extreme. It is needless to say that such conditions would afford many illustrations for the sociologist or the political economist.

But as interested as I am in this people and their past I cannot forget that you are at this time dealing in the present value of nations, and that I am to present to you some of the present day conditions of Kurdistan.

It is evidently impossible, within the limits of this paper, to cover the entire field which would involve the Armenians and the Arabs. I confine myself largely to that part of Kurdistan which lies south of Armenia. What I shall have to say, however, will illustrate conditions throughout all of Asiatic Turkey.

The Kurd is one of the factors entering into the new national movement in Turkey and seriously affecting the issue of it in failure or success. Actual incidents which have come under my own personal observation will best illustrate to you to what extent the the Kurd was a cause in bringing about the overthrow of the old government and what his attitude is toward the new government.

Under the old dispensation Kurdish chiefs enjoyed a large degree of independence and within certain limits were even free to make war upon one another. If they were generous enough in the division of the spoils they might also take toll of such commerce as passed their borders.

There was one Abdul Karim who pitched his black tents between the Tigris River and the great caravan road leading from Diabekir to Mosul. During the year many thousands of dollars worth of European goods passed over these two routes. For years this tent Kurd levied heavy blackmail upon this commerce. He became so rich and powerful that the government of a sub-province was absolutely subject to him.

A few years ago I was floating down the Tigris on a raft, one of a fleet of twenty. Two armed Kurds, servants of this man, hailed us from the banks, "Werra, Werra," "come here," and instantly those twenty rafts swung into shore. The Kurds boarded them and with stones broke into the boxes of merchandise and took from them such goods as they thought would most please their master. Resistance was impossible, redress not worth taking into account. The merchants simply increased the price of the goods to cover the loss.

The same year a French consul with his family was passing down the river and was held up at this same place. He resisted them whereupon they fired upon him riddling the

French flag with bullets. Abdul Hamid made the proper apology to the French government but he also sent a telegram to Abdul Karim—(I was in the town where the telegram was received. It was on everybody's lips) "My son, I kiss you upon your two eyes." A Turkish expression of extreme endearment, and of course expressing the highest approval of Abdul Karim's act.

One of the first acts of the new government was to put Abdul Karim into prison.

In the palace of the Sultan in Constantinople, some years ago was one Ibrahim, a Kurd a member of Abdul Hamid's bodyguard. Ibrahim was so fortunate as to detect a plot to kill his royal master and was at once made a Pasha. He was allowed to return to his home, an obscure village in the Province of Diabekir. Here he had a career worthy of a place in the *Arabian Nights*. Because of the favor of the Sultan he was free to levy toll upon all who came his way. Let it be said however that he scorned to rob the poor. His victims were the rich and the great. He became enormously wealthy and powerful. There was only one official east of Constantinople sufficiently high to require recognition by him. To this official, Ibrahim, at psychological moments, sent presents. The present invariably consisted of two Standard oil tin cans filled with sheep curds, and the cans were always carried by a blind, white mule accompanied by one servant. The blind, white mule and its burden of sheep curds was a well known institution throughout all that region. No one dared to lay hands upon it. It became also a parable in the land and the people never tire of tales about the amount of gold which lay concealed beneath the curds.

Some four or five years ago the City of Diabekir, groaning under the burden of his exactions, sent a delegation of their most influential Moslems to Constantinople with a petition asking for the punishment of this freebooter. They were received by Abdul Hamid with an affable smile but his first words chilled their hearts. "Gentlemen, I hear you are from Diabekir. Can you inform me concerning the welfare of my dear son, Ibrahim?" What could the

gentlemen do but assure his Majesty that his dear son Ibrahim was prospering and that they rejoiced in his prosperity?

Ibrahim pasha was sovereign over a large area and his toll was a heavy drain upon the public revenue. Soon after its accession to power the Young Turk government sent troops against Ibrahim pasha. His stronghold was plundered and burned and he himself died in the flight from arrest and imprisonment.

These incidents are given you as fair illustrations of the conditions which prevailed all over that part of the Empire and as explaining why the cities of the interior although so distant from Constantinople, were so ready to accept the new government. The cities were impoverished through the lawless condition of the country and they welcomed any change which promised relief from such ruinous conditions. The above incidents will throw light also upon the reactionary attitude of the Kurdish chiefs. It is not strange they prefer the old to the new wine.

In order to gain a wider survey of the devastating conditions which prevailed during the last years of Abdul Hamid let another region offer some illustrations. There are four clans of the Nestorians who by reason of the inaccessibility of their valleys have for centuries been able to protect themselves, in a measure, from oppression by the Kurds. A few years ago because one of these clans dared to defend their flocks against a powerful Kurdish noble it was decided to subjugate it.

With the support of the local government an army of several thousand Kurds was gathered. By a ruse the fighting men of the valley were drawn a day's march away from home and then the Kurds poured over the mountain top to make easy prey of all the valley contained. A young Nestorian preacher, seeing the danger to the helpless women and children, put himself at the head of such men as were left, not over one hundred in number, and intercepted this army of Kurds on the mountain side where from among the rocks with the loss of a few lives they were able to hold the enemy in check for some hours until the people had

crossed the Zab River, by means of the narrow wicker bridge, to a place of safety. The little band of defenders then fell back across the bridge which from the bluffs on the opposite side they were able to hold. The Kurds spent two days plundering and burning ten villages, destroying all their houses and all their standing crops. Had it not been for the courage and skill of the young preacher there would have been also a massacre of women and children.

This incident is given not only to illustrate the devastation of the country, but also as exhibiting the conditions under which the Christians lived, for this is but one of many raids which have come under my personal observation.

In the more open part of the country the Christians are fully subject to the government and are unarmed. The government was *able* to protect them but failed to do so and they were left to the mercy of their armed Kurdish neighbors. Left without protection by the proper authorities these villagers sold themselves to the nearest Kurdish chiefs whoever seemed best able to protect them, they having learned by experience that the discriminate tyranny of one master was less ruinous than the indiscriminate plundering of the many. Thus the Christian villages were divided among the more powerful Kurdish nobles. It was the old time feudal system.

As vassals to such nobles the Christians, without wages, sowed their master's fields, reaped his harvest, carried his wood and grass, freely entertained him and his servants when they visited the village and besides all this paid him a yearly tribute in fruit and grain. This was in addition to the regular taxes paid to the government. In return for this service and tribute the baron or noble was supposed to protect his vassals from the irresponsible Kurds who would not only eat but also destroy.

Rival barons sometimes fell out with one another and in their wars, as a system of retaliation, they plundered, burned and destroyed each other's Christian villages. Thus there were destroyed a few years ago the villages of Monsoria, Mar Akha, Mar Yokhanan, Hassan and many others frequently visited by me. The beautiful and well tilled plain

of Bohtan was emptied of its inhabitants and turned into a sheep pasture for the Bedouin Kurds. On a journey from Bitlis to Diabekir about 1906, a score of deserted villages could be counted in one day's march.

The perpetrators of most of these devastations were the Hamideeya Kurds, an irregular body of troops which Abdul Hamid organized and armed and called by his own name for the purpose of carrying out his peculiar policies with reference to the Christians. These Kurds were freed from the authority of the local government and made responsible to the Sultan alone. Even the governor of the province without express orders from the king, feared to take action against these Hamideeya Kurds.

As the result of their devastating raids many thousands of peasants who once tilled the soil, purchased goods of the merchant and produced revenue for the government, were driven off the land. The land became unproductive while the farming class crowded the city streets as beggars or fled for refuge to Persia and Russia.

Wherever one traveled, from merchant, from government official and from army officer, there was one bitter cry, "Our country is ruined." Agriculture had been destroyed, commerce was paralyzed. It grew increasingly impossible to raise the revenue necessary to pay the salaries of the great body of officials, and more serious still, to clothe and feed and pay the army.

Was it strange that not only the merchant class but the entire frame work of the government, civil-officials and army officers, in the remote provinces of Kurdistan as well as in European Turkey, welcomed the Young Turk party as offering them salvation from such intolerable conditions?

Just before the revolution a capable and energetic young officer in conversation with me was lamenting bitterly the evils I have described. He denounced the central government as responsible for the ruin of the country. Striking his palm with his clenched fist he cried out, "It is the government of the old men. They thrust us young men into the inner room, locked and barred the door and grated the

window. But we will break down the doors and smash the windows and we shall be free, and then it will be the government of the young men."

Unexpected by us all, that day has come. It is now the government of the Young Turk. Will he be equal to the occasion? Has he the will and will he be able to correct, or in a measure check, the evils that have had their source in misgovernment? Will he be able to win the people to the support of a reform government to the extent that the people and not the army will be the guarantee of the government's continuance?

In order to give you a basis for forming a judgment on such questions let me set before you some things I have observed in Kurdistan during the last two years.

How difficult the task of the new government is, they know best who have been living in the midst of this heterogeneous nation, and none more than they stand ready with sympathy and a large hope to uphold the hands of the government in the fulfillment of that task.

During the last two years most of my time has been spent among the villages in the mountainous regions of Kurdistan where I had opportunity to see at first hand and at close range the effect upon the Kurds and village Christians of the various orders issued by the government and the effect also of the manner of their execution. I have seen things which should make a pessimist hopeful; on the other hand I have seen things which might make an optimist despair.

That act of the new government which was first in importance for Kurdistan, was the order for the disarming and disbanding of the Hamideeya irregular Kurdish troops. This had a most salutary effect upon both Christians and Kurds, strengthening the confidence of the one in the good intentions and sincerity of the government, and increasing the respect of the other for the government's authority and power. Powerful chiefs were filled with fear, some whom I knew went into hiding. Roads which had been perilous for travelers instantly became safe.

Three years ago a foreigner scarcely dared to venture outside a city wall without a government guard. In 1907 over one road the governor compelled me to take five soldiers as escort on the ground that less than five could not return safely.

This year I traveled very leisurely from the borders of Persia, through Kurdistan and across Mesopotamia to Beirut without any government escort whatever and was not once molested. On this same trip I was almost eye witness of several depredations committed by the Kurds against the Christians. In some of these cases the government inflicted swift and sure punishment upon the offenders; in other cases great injustice was done the Christians by the government and in no case that has come under my observation has the government manifested any sympathy for the Christians in their losses by the Kurds or sought to recover their property for them.

In one case a chief offender escaped by bribing the officer in charge—a captain—and I was informed that this officer was immediately dismissed from the service.

Next in its importance for its effects upon the people as a whole was the order issued by the government for the enrollment of Christians and Jews as soldiers in the regular army. Such a procedure was in violation of the Koran and contrary to all Moslem precedent. The Kurds at first refused to believe in the validity of the order or denied the sincerity of the government. As the actual enrollment of the Christians and Jews went forward and the Kurds were forced to accept it as a fact they were affected in various ways. Some were filled with rage and indulged in threats against the Christians declaring openly and repeatedly, that if they ever got another chance against the Christians they would not leave one of them alive. Others were filled with consternation declaring that this act subverted Islam; that the Christians were now equal to the Moslems and that the next step would be to yield them the supremacy.

In other individual cases there was an awakening to the Kurd's need for schools if he was to maintain his superiority over the Christians or even equality with them.

Let a specific instance which occurred while I was present in a nearby village, be given. A very noted and powerful Kurdish baron, one of the higher type of Kurds, who was hostile to the new régime and refused to believe that the change could be permanent, one day last Spring returned home from the nearest government seat where he had seen the Christians in process of enrollment. He was greatly impressed and deeply moved in spirit. A Nestorian preacher with whom he was on intimate terms was present. He said to him with great earnestness, "Berkho, I have seen strange things today. The world is indeed changed. The Christians are being enrolled as soldiers. Berkho, as plainly as I see these beads in my hand, I see my son your son's servant. Your son is in school reading. He will come out a doctor or a captain in the army. My son is here in the village idle, learning nothing. He will be your son's servant. We Kurds must have schools." There are a few other Kurds of this stamp. It must be said with reference to this enrollment that the Syrian Christians are as much opposed to it as the Kurds. The government very naturally refuses to organize the Christians into separate regiments and insists upon mixed Moslem and Christian regiments. The Christians however, see in this a concealed snare in which they will be in danger of losing their religion. Some of them are resorting to every expedient to escape such military service. The Jew is showing more readiness than the Syrian Christian to bear arms.

Another encouraging sign to which I wish to bear testimony is the very evident improvement in the personnel of the government service. For governors of provinces and sub-provinces men are being appointed who have been educated in Constantinople under European teachers and are, through reading and personal contact with foreigners in sympathy with modern ideas.

Last Spring as traveling companion I was thrown for eight days into closest companionship with such an official. He had with him a text book in the Turkish language, published by a mission of the American Board, a combined geology, astronomy, physical geography, botany and physi-

ology. All his spare time by the way, at the evening stopping place, and even while seated in the carriage, was spent in the study of that book. He was deeply interested in it and was understanding it.

He told me he had boys and girls in American Mission Schools. He had only one complaint to offer, viz.; that his children were not taught enough science. In one town the younger men of the official force organized a club in which Christians and Jews were admitted on equal terms with Moslems. This club stood for progress and civic righteousness. They hired and furnished a room for their meetings, subscribed for newspapers, were organizing a public school and were very vigorously prosecuting the governor of the district for malfeasance of office. These young men called upon me several times and I am persuaded they were as sincere and as earnest and as disinterested in their patriotism as any political club of young men in America.

In one large and important city having a large Moslem population a Christian was appointed Mayor for which position he was in every way fitted, and he was sustained in this position by the Governor in spite of the strong opposition of the Moslems.

In another town farther in the interior the Mayor is a Kurd but in hearty sympathy with the new government. He came to an educated native preacher in the town to take lessons in order to better fit himself to fulfill his duties as mayor.

It was in this town of the Kurdish mayor I heard last winter the bell of the town crier. His shouted proclamation was mirth provoking or pathetic as it might chance to strike you; and yet significant of the new life that has layed hold upon the East. "Hear ye, hear ye," ran the proclamation, "be it known unto you that whosoever inventeth any new thing, to him a suitable reward shall be given."

In the city of Mosul, on the site of ancient Nineveh, a weekly paper is published, called *The Nineveh*. Here also where Jonah delivered his message another proclamation

recently amazed the people. They were warned that a flying machine was coming and that they were neither to fear it nor shoot at it.

Surely the sleep of ages has been broken.

These concrete examples may shed some light upon the personnel of the government in Kurdistan and enable you to form a judgment as to the reality of the political changes in the Turkish empire. Not all has been told; of course, there are still in office men of the old school who exercise a reactionary influence. But the facts presented are such as to inspire confidence in the government's sincerity of purpose in its adoption of modern methods and modern principles.

There remains, however, the other important question. Granting that the leaders are facing the right direction and, however slowly, are really moving forward, will the people follow them in the path of progress? What has been done to incline favorably the minds and the hearts of the people as a whole toward the new dispensation? In what way and to what extent are the Christians a factor in the National movement? In considering these questions we are confronted at once with the Kurd. Is it possible to convert the Kurd into a good citizen? It is possible and I think his education has been begun.

Let me speak from personal knowledge a few words in testimony of this. First there is the raw stuff in him which makes education possible. He is sprung from the same stock as the Anglo-Saxon. Note the remarkable similarity in language. The Kurd says "heg" for egg; "stâr" for stâr; "noo" for new; "no" for no; "ribbâr" for river. Their words for father, mother and brother are almost identically the same as ours. For "brother mine" they say "bra-a-min," the "min" being our pronoun, "mine." They have the word "girt" to bind and the Scotch word "greet" to cry. In its monosyllabic words, its simplicity of construction and its slight inflection, the Kurdish much resembles the English. It is plain the Kurd is a distant cousin of the American.

And not only in language but in character also, there is a family resemblance. To see it plainly, indeed, we must be looked upon as we were in the days of the Scottish chiefs.

To one who has spent years in Kurdistan, who has been guest in Kurdish hut and Kurdish hall there is a peculiar pleasure in reading stories descriptive of English and Scottish life of a few centuries ago because of the remarkable similarity between the Kurd of to-day and the old time Scotchman. There is the same kind of a dwelling; the same household life; the same relation between master and servant, and the best type of Kurdish woman is not unworthy to be compared with our great grandmothers.

There is the same clan spirit; the hot temper, the fierce feuds, the sheep stealing, the wild raids, are the same. There is the same open handed hospitality and also the canny regard for the mickle which makes the muckle.

If the Kurd is revengeful, treacherous and bloodthirsty, were not our Scotch ancestors also? A Kurd and his dagger is a tame creature as compared with the ancient Highlander and his terrible battleaxe. There is undoubtedly a strong family likeness between the Scotchman of a few centuries back and the Kurd of today.

If Henry Drummond and James Bryce could be evolved from a Rob Roy it is safe to say that something can be made of the Kurd.

But how? I do not hesitate to say, by the very same means which John Knox used in making Scotland, and that Luther used in making Germany,—the preached word of God. This undoubtedly is the chief means for transforming these wild and barbarous people into peaceable and useful citizens.

But there are, also, contributory means and it is to one of these, I wish, in closing, to call your attention. I refer to an educative process that has been going on for years. It might be called, a peripatetic institute, in which the missionaries and the Christians have been the teachers.

Let it be put in a concrete form.

For seventy years missionaries have been in Kurdistan dwelling in its cities and towns. The itinerating missionary,

during this time, in his many journeys, has literally crisscrossed the country. He is out among the villages for months at a time. He travels by caravan or on foot so every twenty-five miles of these many journeys has meant a night's lodging in a village. He is always received by the most influential man of the village or town. This man may be a government official or an army officer. He may be a merchant. If it is in a village it may be a Kurdish Agha or Sheik or only a Kurdish farmer. Whoever he is or whatever he is; be it the hall of the Sheik or the hut of the farmer, the missionary receives as a rule, a courteous and hospitable reception. After the evening meal a crowd gathers, in which will be, whether few or many, some of the leading men of the place.

First in the mind of the missionary, of course, is his chief message—some spiritual truth—which he must deliver and for which even in Kurdish castle or government house there is usually an opportunity. It is not of this, however, I would speak now, but of what may be called the missionary's *secondary* message. The spiritual truth has been imparted but there remain yet several hours of the evening. Their host's tobacco pouch is at their disposal, the fire is cheerful, the cushions are soft and the strange looking foreigner will doubtless have some news from the world about which they are hearing many wonderful things, so why should they go? They are ready to sit and listen for hours. What shall the missionary's secondary message be.

Speaking from my own personal experience I find I have repeatedly talked on such subjects as these—"Modern Inventions;" "Labor Saving Machinery;" "Modern War Implements;" "Form of American Government;" "Our Tax System; how the tax is assessed—how paid and what benefit accrues to the tax payers;" "American Agriculture;" "Irrigation;" "The Comparative Cost of Caravan and of Wheeled Transportation." I have even found interested listeners to an explanation of "Municipal Bonding of City Utilities." In the presentation of such subjects as these there is, inevitably, a contrast unfavorable to Kurdistan or Turkey.

As an offset to this another line of subjects is often introduced. "Turkey as the Land of the Great Prophets;" or "The Land of the Three Great Religions;" "The Past Glories of the Land of the East." "The Present Natural Resources of Kurdistan;" "Agriculture and Sheep Raising;" "The cost to the Turkish Consumer of Sending his Raw Cotton and Wool to Europe to be Manufactured."

Then still another line of subjects introducing the moral factor into National prosperity, as "Common Confidence an Essential Basis for National and International Commerce;" "Personal Character and National Credit;" "The Beneficence of Law" (on this particular subject I gave a series of prepared lectures in a remote mountain district of Kurdistan.)

The above subjects are fair samples of the missionary's secondary message. Considering the character of the subjects and the interest with which they are listened to, is it a misnomer to speak of such work, in a modest way, as a "Peripatetic Institute?"

But to measure the area of this influence, consider the unit of it—the night's lodging every twenty-five miles. Multiply this by the number of lodging places in one journey; and this by the number of journeys made by one missionary; and this by the number of missionaries that have been traveling, and this by the seventy years that the missionaries have been abroad in the land walking up and down the length and breadth of it and it will be seen that the superficial area covered, the number of people affected, and the amount of industrial, political and social information imparted are not inconsiderable.

This work may be looked upon, again, as a national psychological process.

Seventy years ago Turkey could scarcely be said to have national consciousness, so far as the common people were concerned. Each city was an independent unit; no village recognized any relationship with any other village. City or village had no conception of a nation of which it was an integral part. The government was simply a system for the collection of taxes. That the people should be proud

of this government or ashamed of it—there was no such impulse. To speak of their country in such terms as pride and shame would have been unintelligible to them. How their country or government stood before the outside world gave them no concern.

Now how has the missionary's secondary message affected such a state as this?

It is said that the individual awakens to self consciousness by the perception of another "ego," or, a "not I." Does not a nation attain to self consciousness by the same process? And has there not been this national psychological process as a result, at least in small part, of the educational work referred to?

The people of the interior have traveled but little and have read nothing. They are naturally intensely provincial. There has been little or no cognizance of the nation. These secondary messages have gradually made the people familiar with other nations as national entities. Through this frequent perception of other nations having national life, national reputation, national character, national glory or shame, the term Turkish nation has come to have significance to them. There has come to be a realization of their entity as a national unit.

Looking back over twenty-three years of contact with the people of Kurdistan I can discern very distinctly this process through which the people are beginning to find themselves. I recall incidents which indicate the rise of national self-consciousness, the manifestation of national shame, the beginning of national ambition, while today we are witnessing incipient national volition. It was, among other factors, the frequent presentation of the composite picture of a Christian civilization or Christian nation that awakened their national consciousness; that revealed themselves to themselves, as a nation, in contrast with that fair picture, and this revelation in time operated to induce shame of their national short-coming and an ambition to excel as a nation.

Is it not possible that in this process of education we have, in part, the explanation of how it was that the Turkish revo-

lution was accomplished, at its opening, without the shedding of blood, and without serious disturbances in the remote provinces? The people were willing to receive a reform government because, in a measure, they understood and appreciated what was involved in such a government.

It is evident that the success of this new national movement will depend upon what proportion of the people can be won to its support.

I have spoken of the missionary's secondary message delivered to a circle of Kurdish listeners while the guest of the village. Really *his* talk was only *one* factor in the work of that night and if there had been no way of continuing and deepening its influence, the talk would have been as seed sown upon the rock or by the wayside. For after all, the missionary's visits are infrequent. He is soon gone; who will nurture the seed sown? For the one village he visits, there are many he never visits. Who will scatter the seed more widely?

It is at this point the Christians appear as a factor in the movement. The missionary is one; they are many. The missionary touches but a few villages; the Christians are scattered throughout the length and breadth of Kurdistan. The missionary goes; the Christians remain to water and to nurture the seed sown. The Kurds have listened to the missionary's talk with interest, and his marvelous memory will retain the words for years, but they have understood the ideas and even the words imperfectly, doubt their truth, perhaps, and fail to catch their connection with their own life and condition. The Christians, many of them, have been in close contact with the missionary, in the school or church or home they have heard these things more frequently, have apprehended them more fully and are fully, and some of them enthusiastically, persuaded of the blessings wrapped up in the Western ideas advanced by their missionary friend. So it is, they become the missionary's advocate; they vouch for his truthfulness. They explain what has been but imperfectly understood and persuade the Kurds of the value of the new ideas presented.

And more important still, discussion is precipitated. In the presence of the foreigner the Kurd will make no dissent to any proposition but the Christian villager is also a son of the soil and with him the Kurdish baron can debate. Now discussion is education. There is mental stimulus in it. There is development of new ideas and the discipline of yielding to their power. There is the moral benefit of expressing one's convictions and defending them, and such discussions are largely possible only through the agency of these Christians.

Parties are forming, in sentiment if not in fact, among the Kurds—the “stand-patters” and “the insurgents,” and where parties are, there is political life; and where there is life there will be growth and progress.

But if this national movement is solely political and intellectual and have no moral fibre wrought into it, it, as many another revolution, must end in disaster. A moral and spiritual quality must be imparted to this new nation if it is to become truly prosperous, if it is to abide a worthy member in the great federation of nations.

Here again the Christians of the Turkish Empire as evangelists of a saving and uplifting Gospel are playing an important part and are to become, we hope, still more influential in the future than in the past.

Recalling the honorable past of these old churches, their heroic keeping of the faith through so great trials, their wonderful preservation by the God of Nations, who conserves national energy as he does natural energy, recalling all these we can not doubt but that they have been preserved to perform some useful and honorable function in the body politic of the new nation.